

Sure, We Remember When... Café 322 in Sierra Madre

Music Review

By Bill Peters

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Wednesday night, June 24, a vocal group called Remember When did just that: they took the audience at Café 322 in Sierra Madre on a trip of old tunes from the 1930s and 1940s in a close-harmony style that became popular in a slightly later period, around the 1960s. Taking a song styling of vocal groups like Manhattan Transfer, Johnny Mann Singers, and others, Remember When, a 12-member ensemble, traveled a long road of memories for many. The chorus performed with smooth deftness that made the musical journey a pleasure.

Mounting the stage at the small-ish cabaret on Sierra Madre Blvd., the group launched into Harry Warren's "Chattanooga Choo-Choo", Johnny Mercer's "Dream", the song and lyrics used as a theme song by the Pied Pipers in the 1940s, and "Mac the Knife", the Kurt Weill-Berthold Brecht song from "The Threepenny Opera". Following in quick order were "Fly Me to the Moon", "Route 66", and a medley of songs built around "Juke Box Saturday Night", the Glenn Miller-Modernaire's hit song. The medley included "Don't Get Around Much Anymore", "Stompin' at the Savoy", "Sentimental Journey", "Sentimental Reasons" and "Caravan". In this set, the group showed plenty of verve and smooth interpretations but a few mishaps occurred



“Fly Me to the Moon” in an otherwise good performance The vocalizing continued in a second set that consisted of some novelty tunes that if you remember, well, you’re much older than I: One was a big hit for the Ink Spots, “Java Jive” (a cup-a, cup-a, cup-a) with lyrics by Milton Drake, the man responsible for “Mairzy-Doats”.

The third and final set brought fine old tunes like Glenn Miller’s specialties “Pennsylvania 6-5000” and “Moonlight Serenade. Others were “Night and Day”, “You Made me Love You”, “Blue Moon”, “Satin Doll”, “Beyond the Sea” and some five more. In this set, the best of the evening, “Night and Day” was quite wonderful and “Satin Doll” had a special smoothness that really worked and in “Beyond the Sea” the group came alive. Sierra Madreans Andrea Gayhart and Leslie Ziff handled solos as did founder of the group, Steve Hawkins and tenor Robin Winternheimer.

Hawkins, and several in the group, sang with the Sierra Madre Chorale. Hawkins says he got his inspiration to start Remember When at a Southern California Choral Society festival when he heard a group singing songs from the Great American Song Book. “the great group sound we can produce when we sing together is such a terrific, smooth and hot sound,” he says.

"In addition to Hawkins, Gayhart, Winternheimer and Ziff, members of Remember When include Gloria Denison, Ursula Hawkins, Toni Enright, Suzanna Ballmer, Kristine Kwong, Roger Moon, Clyde Yocum, Earnie Lochert. Katherine Dryden serves as musical director.

Remember When can be heard at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 14 when they present a special musical program honoring members of the U S Military at the Pasadena Masonic Lodge’s regular monthly family dinner, which for this occasion will be open to the public. Dinner is \$8.00 per person. The Pasadena Masonic Lodge is located at 200 S. Euclid Ave., Pasadena. For information on this event, please call (626) 795-5610. For information about Remember When, visit their website www.jazzvocalgroup.com.

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